

Top 5 Youth Hitting Problems & Drills to Fix Them

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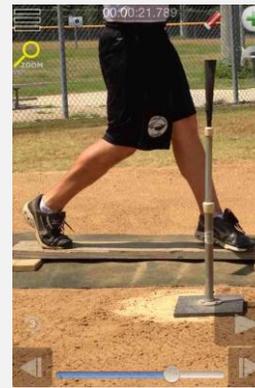
By Coach Kuebler



**COLONIAL
BASEBALL
INSTRUCTION**

1. Poor balance: Many youth baseball players have “sloppy” feet. What I mean by sloppy feet is that they lose their balance after they swing. They may over rotate, under rotate and swing from their heels, which will make them lose the connection with the ground thus losing power. Also, when you swing from your heels, you have a tendency to pull the bat out of the hitting zone, decreasing your chances of hitting the ball on the sweet spot of the barrel.

Balance Beam Drill: Lay a 2x6 piece of lumber on the ground (or you can build fancier version to get more height off the ground) and have the player swing off the tee or soft toss. The player’s heels should hang off the edge a bit. Have the player do what ever they can to stay on the beam after finishing the swing. Warning, their legs may get tired and sore...but this GOOD! This means they are working their hitting muscles!



Swing-Hold-Drop: Swing using a tee, soft toss or even dry swings and have the player hold their finish for a 3 count. Then the batter should drop their back knee to the ground slowly. Once the knee touches the ground, lift straight back up to your finish position. If they can’t hold their finish, they have poor balance and they may need to simplify their swing.



2. Poor Timing: Many younger players have a problem getting their front foot (stride foot) down before they swing. There is a misconception in youth hitters that they need to see the pitch coming in before they decide to swing at it or take it. In actuality, it is often too late by then and results in a rushed swing that is late, out of control and swing mechanics fall apart. Also, the player's hands may start to "leak" forward before they commit to swing. Hitters NEED to keep their hands back when striding (taking a step) creating elastic energy...MORE POWER!

Soft Toss Fake Drill: Have the tosser mix in a fake toss every 3rd or 4th flip to keep the hitter honest. The hitter must *load, hold* their hands back and keep the stride foot down until the next flip comes in. This replicates hitting an off speed pitch.

Step Back and Gather Drill: Using a [Tanner Tee](#), start with feet together and have the ball lined up with your belly button. Hands are relaxed, bat on shoulder. Now, step back with back foot, load hands back and swing. This will emphasize back leg load and keeping the hands back prior to triggering the swing.



Knob to Knee Drill: This drill emphasizes getting the front (stride) foot down before triggering the hips and hands. Notice that the left knee rises across to the right shoulder, creating torque. Use a [tee](#) for this drill.



3. Hitting with topspin: We want hitters to create “backspin” to get the ball to carry.

Double tee: Set up 2 [tees](#), one on the front of the plate and one on the point (back) of the plate. Set a ball on the tee on the front of the plate. Try to hit the ball off the front tee with out hitting the tee that is in the back. This should keep your bat level through the zone and create backspin.

Advanced skills tee: The [AST](#) makes you get your swing on plane. If you “dip” your bat will hit the forward arm. Think of the swing as landing an airplane and going down the runway. You want your swing to be “short to, long through”.



Ultra Instructo Swing from Louisville Slugger: Good habits bars will keep your swing on plane or your bat will hit the tee...ouch! If you keep the bat on the same plane as the pitch, chances are, you will make solid contact with more swings and you will hit the ball with backspin.



4. Player does not “release” their hands properly: Usually I see this when a player tries to “muscle up” and tries to swing too hard. They forget that their wrists are the quickest set of joints of their body. They must think of them as a pivot point at the end of the bat handle.

One knee hitting drill: Hit off a tee or soft toss. Kneel on the ground with your back knee down and front leg extended. This will take your lower body out of the swing. So to create any type of bat-speed and not fall over, the player must use his hands correctly. Think of using an axe to chop a tree down. Be sure not to “roll your wrists” rather “un-hinge” them. ***Make sure the player uses a lighter bat or chokes up on his regular bat.



Swing XP: The [Swing XP](#) practice bats have a heavily weighted handle and can be used with regular baseballs off the tee or in batting practice. The Swing XP bats will promote improved mechanics, increased swing speed, increased grip and wrist strength and will shorten the bat’s path to the ball. I personally incorporate this training bat in most lessons, camps and team practices. I see it time and time again help hitters improve their performance. My varsity baseball team improved their team batting average this season over 60 points using the Swing XP in daily BP! My hitters will take a few swings with this bat in the on-deck circle before using their competition bat. Click [HERE](#) for more info.





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Muhl Kicker Training Bat: This is a weighted training bat that can be used with regulation baseballs and softballs. It has a one inch steel barrel, which is connected to a machined aluminum handle using our patented shock absorbing connection. It also has a sliding steel element in the barrel that that clicks or “kicks” when the bat head is extended to teach a short compact swing. Similar concept to the SwingRite but you cannot adjust any settings for the speed of your swing.

5. Collapsing the backside and swinging up to the ball: Players will keep their back heel on the ground, drop their back shoulder and barrel or drag the barrel to the hitting zone. A hitter that does this usually hits a lot of pop-up to the opposite field that spins toward foul territory. Sometimes this situation calls for a lighter bat.

Knee kick drill: Set up any tee at your middle contact position. You will take your normal swing but just after contact, you need to push off your back leg and drive your knee high into the air. Two keys to remember are; drive your knee JUST AFTER contact and HOLD a balanced position with your knee high to avoid spinning out. It is important to drive your knee to the pitcher and not to swing your knee around your body.



Thank you for taking the time to read up on some of my “go to” drills for our youth baseball players. I hope you’re able to find this resource useful. Be sure to come back to ColonialBaseballInstruction.com for more baseball coaching tips, videos, baseball gear and coaching recourses. If you ever have any questions about coaching baseball, please do not hesitate to [contact](#) me. I would love to talk shop or at least lead you in the right direction.

If you found at least one of these drills useful, please do me a favor, go to the CBI [Facebook page](#) and click [Like](#).

Stay on plane,

Coach Kuebler